

Chapter 5: Monitoring Plan

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Bald Eagles

Monitoring of the federally-threatened bald eagle will be conducted yearly within this important breeding and wintering area.

Known nest sites will be monitored three times yearly during:

- (1) mid-February - early March to confirm occupancy of nest
- (2) mid-April - early May to confirm successful hatching of any young;
- (3) late June - mid-July to confirm fledgling success.

Monitoring of nest sites at this time will be completed on foot because aerial surveys by helicopter could unnecessarily disrupt breeding and rearing activity.

If funding permits, an annual mid-winter helicopter survey will be conducted to coincide as closely as possible with the nationwide mid-winter bald eagle count. This is usually done during the middle of January. The survey route will cover Cache Creek from Cache Creek Dam to Rumsey and the North Fork from the northern end of Indian Valley Reservoir downstream to the confluence with Cache Creek.

Other winter monitoring will be done on-the-ground during site visits to the CCNA and during the mid-winter guided eagle hikes.

If additional nests are observed during the annual winter helicopter survey, these will be verified on-the-ground during the breeding season.

Tule Elk

The tule elk herd will be surveyed once a year by helicopter. CDFG will conduct the survey with assistance from BLM, dependent upon adequate funding. This survey will be a herd composition count and will document the locations and size of the three subherds within the Cache Creek area. Surveys will attempt to determine the locations of sensitive elk habitat, such as calving areas.

Several elk in the Wilson Valley and Bear Creek subherds have been collared with GPS units to facilitate tracking of elk from the air and on-the-ground throughout the year.

Other monitoring of elk habitat will occur on-the-ground, primarily elk use of habitat improvement projects (seedings, burns, water developments).

Other Wildlife Surveys

Composition counts for blacktail deer will be completed yearly by CDFG dependent upon funding. Other wildlife surveys will be completed periodically as necessary and as funding allows.

Rare Plant Populations

Known populations of rare plants will be surveyed once every three years during the appropriate flowering season. Surveys will focus on trend and any disturbance or potential disturbance which could occur.

Other surveys to inventory for new populations will coincide with the monitoring surveys conducted during the appropriate flowering season. These surveys will focus in sensitive habitats

for these plants, and throughout new land acquisitions.

Riparian Habitat

Cache Creek will continue to be monitored on foot from Cache Creek Dam downstream to the confluence with Bear Creek (BLM, 1990). The North Fork will be monitored from Highway 20 downstream to the confluence with Cache Creek. Monitoring will occur every three years and will focus on habitat conditions, amount of reproduction, and invasion of non-native exotics, including saltcedar, arundo, and ravnagrass. Photos will be taken at established photo-points located every ¼ mile in order to document changes over time.

Other monitoring may occur on an as-needed basis such as surveys for the presence of hydrilla, an aquatic noxious weed, which has been a major threat to the ecosystem of Clear Lake. Lake County and the State Department of Agriculture have been involved in an intensive effort to eradicate this plant from Clear Lake for over ten years. If hydrilla spreads beyond Cache Creek Dam into Cache Creek, it could potentially become a threat to the Sacramento River and Delta ecosystems.

WILDERNESS

The Rocky Creek/Cache Creek Wilderness Study Area (WSA) will be monitored once yearly from the air (dependent upon funding) and a minimum of once a month on-the-ground. In the event of Wilderness designation, monitoring will occur twice

monthly. Aerial flights will coincide with other surveys, i.e. bald eagle winter surveys and other overflights. On-the-ground monitoring will coincide with other field visits into the CCNA.

Monitoring will primarily focus on signs of any unauthorized activities, including vehicles in closure areas, road building, grazing trespass, among others. If any unauthorized uses are detected, an investigation will be conducted followed by appropriate action to resolve these violations.

To inform the public as to the location of the WSA or Wilderness boundary, all trails or other access points leading into the WSA or Wilderness from private or other public lands will be marked with boundary signs.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

A monitoring plan has been in place for several years for the identified cultural sites within the CCNA. The plan consists of monitoring sites from established photo points by using erosion stakes placed at measured spaces along the creek corridor, and by making field visits to each site at intervals varying from annually to as much as ten years. The sites are evaluated on visible site contents, nature and rate of deterioration, possible threats, public versus private ownership, and current best use of the cultural resource. Each cultural resource is assigned to one or more of seven possible management classifications as follows:

1. Conservation for future use
2. Management use
3. Socio-cultural use

4. Public use
5. Discharged use
6. Scientific study or use
7. Compatible uses

As cultural sites are monitored over the years, changes in specific sites from natural forces, visitors, or management decisions associated with other resources are recorded. Photos can be used to assess changes. Based upon these site evaluations, necessary action and management decisions can then be made with constructive feedback for past management actions and/or the need for further action.

A field book depicting cultural site locations is kept in the Ukiah Field Office. This book contains a map of the area and site locations, individual site records, photos and slides, location maps for erosion stakes and photo points, resource condition information, and management-use classification.

RECREATION

Visitor-Use Monitoring

The BLM may provide survey cards at the Redbud Trailhead and other access points where appropriate. These cards provide an indication of what types of recreation activities are most sought after within the CCNA. It also serves as a mechanism for providing the public an opportunity to comment on how BLM and CDFG can improve management of the area. Visitor Services and Law Enforcement Rangers will also include visitor-use observations as part of their written daily reports.

Trail Monitoring

Each trail will be traveled a minimum of once each year, preferably twice, (budget and staffing permitting) to determine trail maintenance needs, eliminate safety hazards, ensure adequate signing, and to get an estimate of the degree of trail use. Monitoring will be established through visual reconnaissance, followed by trip reports reviewed by managers to maintain records of trail condition and use.

Rafting use Monitoring

BLM will monitor rafting, both by commercial rafters (i.e., Buck Island to Cache Creek Canyon Regional Park run) and private boaters, to gauge visitor use levels and to identify any problems associated with rafting overuse on Cache Creek. This will involve one or two weekend field trips a year to get an overall look at weekend river-use during the high-use periods. Those operating under special recreation use-permits will be monitored as appropriate to ensure compliance with permit stipulations. If problems persist associated with visitor use capacities, safety, or sanitation, it may be necessary to modify the level of boating use allowed on Cache Creek. Monitoring will also focus on the level of vehicle traffic on Road 40 and the Langs Peak Road.

Access Monitoring

BLM will frequently monitor access points around the perimeter of the CCNA to guard against unauthorized uses, particularly illegal vehicle access. Monitoring will normally involve driving along perimeter roads such as Highways 20 and 16, as well as interior roads including Yolo County Road 40, Langs

Peak Road to Buck Island, and Fiske Creek Road. Monitoring will focus on intrusions, such as cut fences, and open gates. Interior patrols will also look for vehicle tracks or other signs of unauthorized activities. Patrols will be conducted by both law enforcement rangers as part of their normal patrol responsibilities and by other employees and volunteers to ensure that management prescriptions for the area are not being compromised.